

CLOSING OF UPLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH-APPROVED

WHEREAS, the Upland United Methodist Church located in Upland, Nebraska, was founded in 1887 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

WHEREAS, the church conference of the Upland United Methodist Church voted on September 25, 2017, to close the church; and

WHEREAS, Rev Cindy Karges, the District Superintendent of the Gateway District, has recommended that the church be closed; and

WHEREAS, the consent of the Gateway District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. has been granted; and

WHEREAS, all proper disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Upland United Methodist Church in Franklin County, Nebraska, is hereby declared closed as of September 25, 2017, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Upland United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closing, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Minden United Methodist Church.
3. That title to the real property [and other assets] held by Upland United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference be hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the Upland United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

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CLOSING OF GLADE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH-APPROVED

WHEREAS, the Glade United Methodist Church located in Glade, Kansas, was founded in June 1881 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

WHEREAS, the church conference of the Glade United Methodist Church voted on February 18, 2018, to close the church; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Delores J. Williamston, the District Superintendent of the Hays District, has recommended that the church be closed; and

WHEREAS, the consent of the Hays District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. has been granted; and

WHEREAS, all proper disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Glade United Methodist Church in Phillips County, Kansas, is hereby declared closed as of June 30, 2018, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Glade United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closing, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Phillipsburg United Methodist Church.
3. That title to the real property [and other assets] held by Glade United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference be hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the Glade United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

CLOSING OF GARDNER FIRST LIGHT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH -APPROVED

WHEREAS, the First Light United Methodist Church located in Gardner, Kansas, was founded in 2010 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

RESOLUTION #3 - CLOSING OF GARDNER FIRST LIGHT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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WHEREAS, the church conference of the First Light United Methodist Church voted on April 20, 2018, to close the church; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Emmert, the District Superintendent of the Kansas City District, has recommended that the church be closed; and

WHEREAS, the consent of the Kansas City District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. has been granted; and

WHEREAS, all proper Disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the First Light United Methodist Church in Johnson County, Kansas, is hereby declared closed as of May 20, 2018, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the First Light United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closing, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Olathe Grace United Methodist Church.
3. That title to the real property held by First Light United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the First Light United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

CLOSING OF CEDAR VALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH-APPROVED

WHEREAS, the Cedar Vale United Methodist Church located in Cedar Vale, Chautauqua County, Kansas, was founded in 1872 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its laity is valued.

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community; and

WHEREAS, the church conference of the Cedar Vale United Methodist Church voted on July 30, 2017, to close the church; and

WHEREAS, David E. Watson, the District Superintendent of the Parsons District, has recommended that the church be closed; and

WHEREAS, the consent of the Parsons District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. has been granted; and

WHEREAS, all proper Disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Cedar Vale United Methodist Church in Chautauqua County, Kansas, is hereby declared closed as of June 14, 2018, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.

2. That the membership of the Cedar Vale United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closing, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Sedan United Methodist Church.

3. That title to the real property [and other assets] held by Cedar Vale United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference be hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.

4. That the official records and papers of the Cedar Vale United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

CLOSING OF GOVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH-APPROVED

WHEREAS, the Gove United Methodist Church located in Gove County, Kansas was founded in 1886 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

WHEREAS, the church conference of the Gove United Methodist Church voted on June 3, 2018 to close the church; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Donald J. Hasty, the District Superintendent of the Dodge City-Hays Districts, has recommended that the church be closed; and

WHEREAS, the consent of the Hays District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr. has been granted; and

WHEREAS, all proper Disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Gove United Methodist Church in Gove County, Kansas, is hereby declared closed as of June 30, 2018, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Gove United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closing, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Grainfield United Methodist Church.
3. That title to any remaining real property and other assets held by Gove United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets and the real property previously acquired by the Kansas West Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the Gove United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

SUPPORTING LAY LEADERSHIP
-APPROVED

WHEREAS, the Great Plains Conference Bishop, District Superintendents and clergy are actively recruiting and encouraging laity to be involved and hold important roles in the life of the church, at the local, district and conference level, with the goal

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of “empowering the laity to more fully participate in the sharing of the Wesleyan witness, and focusing ministry squarely on the mission field for each congregation” (<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/newsdetail/bishop-announcesstructural-changes-to-allow-for-stronger-emphasis-on-mission-field-7399023>); and

WHEREAS, ministry cannot happen without the involvement of laity and action and movements have to be supported at the grassroots level; and

WHEREAS, all clergy have a vote at Annual Conference but laity in many conference leadership roles do not (with an exception at times through the complicated lay equalization formula); and

WHEREAS, the Conference Secretary of Global Ministries serving as the connection to the General Board of Global Ministries has a vote but the Conference Peace with Justice Coordinator serving as the link to the General Board of Church and Society does not.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that all laity in leadership roles at the conference level of the Great Plains Conference be given a vote at each Annual Conference including chairs of conference committees as well as the Conference Peace with Justice Coordinator.

Implemented by: Great Plains Conference Planning Team

Signature: Andrea Paret

Submitted by: Andrea Paret, Great Plains Conference Peace with Justice Coordinator

RENEWING HAITI COVENANT -APPROVED

RATIONAL: Since the 1970s, the former Kansas East Conference churches have been developing a relationship with the Methodist Church of Haiti. During the 2010 Kansas East Annual Conference a resolution was passed to formalize this long relationship by approving a covenant partnership. With the formation of the Great Plains Conference in 2014, the Haiti Great Plains partnership was created. It is time to update and renew this covenant.

WHEREAS, the mission of The United Methodist Church is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,”

WHEREAS, the Great Plains Conference is called “to equip and connect congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ,” with a commitment to “Christ-centered excellence” and strong global mission partnerships,

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WHEREAS, the Methodist Church of Haiti seeks to be “a visible presence of Christ among the Haitian people through its spiritual and social proclamation and continues to strive to become a self-sustained church,”

WHEREAS, Jesus sent his disciples out in mission “two by two” (Luke 10:1-2, NIV), and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist is a Connectional Church locally and internationally with ecumenical partners near and far;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Plains United Methodist Conference and the Methodist Church of Haiti renews our covenant of solidarity in Christ and mutually commit ourselves to:

1. Be in ministry together in a supportive and mutual relationship for the wholistic education and leadership development of our clergy and laity, with a focus on youth and children of La Gonave.
2. Uplift one another in prayer on a regular basis.
3. Help people in the Great Plains and Haiti to learn about—and from—one another, including our history and culture, our blessings and challenges, and our faith and life;
4. Communicate through approved channels, as established by each partner.
5. Encourage, support and learn with local farmers in La Gonave.
6. Report each year to our respective Annual Conferences through normal existing channels.
7. Review, evaluate, and adjust the approach and tone of partnering for this Covenant in whole or in part, as may be needed in the future.
8. Cooperate in developing and implementing various projects and activities. Currently, our priority is to explore projects of income generation, scholarship program for Charles Wesley school in Anse-a-galet and scholarships in partnership with Africa University and other colleges and universities in Haiti and throughout the Caribbean.
9. Develop procedures to assist in the timely and accountable, transfer of funds for use in implementing the projects and activities made possible through this covenant.

Note: This covenant shall be considered effective once approved or ratified by the Great Plains Conference and the Methodist Church of Haiti Conference. It shall then be in effect for at least four years, at which time it MAY be renewed for an additional four years or change the priorities.

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ....So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work

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for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”

Galatians 6:2, 10

Implemented by: Mercy & Justice Team of The Great Plains Conference

Signatures: Rev. Kalaba Chali plus 5 others

Submitted by: Rev. Kalaba Chali, Mercy & Justice Coordinator, Great Plains Conference

OUR SINFUL IMMIGRATION SYSTEM-APPROVED

RATIONALE: Immigrants are living in fear because they are increasingly victimized by family separation, detention, deportation, raids, and acts of hate and violence. They are judged and treated inhumanely because of their immigration status, their country of origin, race, religion, or other differences. Christians are called to respond to situations of great suffering such as this.

WHEREAS, Jesus identified himself as being one with the stranger in the land (Matthew 25:35), and the people of God are called to regard the sojourner as “one of your citizens” and love them as we do ourselves (Leviticus 19:33-34); and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Book of Resolutions calls on United Methodists to “strengthen their resolve to be faithful to respond to the needs of others, particularly as we face laws, whose primary intent is to discourage Christians from fulfilling their mission to love and help the neighbor. We remember when the apostles were faced by similar circumstances after authorities wanted to impede the fulfillment of their mission, they firmly declared in Acts 5:29: ‘We must obey God rather humans!’ hence the Christian mandate to engage in civil disobedience when laws and policies deem to be unjust.” (2016 Book of Resolutions #3284).

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church’s Social Principles “recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all. We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families.” (§2016 Book of Discipline)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our churches and their members to oppose legislation, purporting to be immigration reform, that prevents family

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reunification, prioritizes corporate profit over the relief of human suffering, and values security over the lives and well-being of those hoping to escape poverty and violence and seeking a better life in this country.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our political leaders and policy makers to assure our laws affirm the worth, dignity, inherent values, and rights of immigrants and refugees and make the words of Emma Lazarus

“Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” inscribed on a plaque mounted inside the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty true once again.

Implemented by: Great Plains Conference Secretary; Great Plains Conference congregations; Great Plains Mercy & Justice

Team; Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team

Signatures: Jean Supencheck, First UMC, Columbus, NE; plus 118 others.

Submitted by: Andrea Paret - Great Plains Peace with Justice Coordinator; Member/Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team; Member/Great Plains Mercy & Justice Team; Member/First United Methodist Church in Norfolk, Neb. plus 2 others

The Call to Sanctuary-APPROVED

RATIONALE: Our current immigration system is causing unmeasurable harm. Children and adults live in fear. The trauma this is causing is a national health crisis. Teachers and counselors report that many students from immigrant families are tearful or disengaged, worried whether their parents will be home when they return from school or whether they themselves will be forced to leave the country they consider home.

WHEREAS, all of us are created in the image of God, the concern for foreigners and strangers is lifted up in the Bible numerous times, urging us to treat the sojourner as one of our own (Leviticus 19:33-34; Ezekiel 47:22), and we are called to love one another “not with words and speech but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18);

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Book of Resolutions includes a “call upon all United Methodist Churches to ... support those churches that prayerfully choose to offer sanctuary to undocumented migrants facing deportation” (2016 Book of Resolutions, #3281);

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Book of Resolutions calls on United

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Methodists to “strengthen their resolve to be faithful to respond to the needs of others, particularly as we face laws, whose primary intent is to discourage Christians from fulfilling their mission to love and help the neighbor. We remember when the apostles were faced by similar circumstances after authorities wanted to impede the fulfillment of their mission, they firmly declared in Acts 5:29: ‘We must obey God rather humans!’ hence the Christian mandate to engage in civil disobedience when laws and policies deem to be unjust.” (2016 BookT of Resolutions #3284).

WHEREAS, some of our unauthorized brothers and sisters are told that they have no legal basis to remain in this country and are given final orders of removal even though

- they know that deportation will be a death sentence, or
- their country of origin is a place of poverty, violence, or tyranny and not compatible with life, or
- they have not been to their country of origin for many years, have no familiarity with it, and know no one there, or
- the United States is their home and their national loyalty is to the United States, or
- their families will remain here and they cannot accept separation from their loved ones, or
- legal errors, improper judgements, or new evidence justify relief from their deportation order.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church urges congregations to show radical hospitality to all of God’s children, especially the persecuted ones, and encourages congregations to explore offering sanctuary to those crying out for help who are suffering under our unjust and broken immigration system;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church commits to providing spiritual and material support to its congregations that choose to offer sanctuary for the sojourner among us.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church endorses the Council of Bishops Immigration Task Force Report and Recommendations and assures churches that as they take risks and act to offer sanctuary, they will have Conference support and that pastors need not fear for their appointments.

Implemented by: Great Plains Conference Congregations; Great Plains Mercy & Justice Team; Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team

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Signatures: Jean Supencheck plus 114 others
Submitted by: Larry Jensen - Chair/Omaha Area Sanctuary Network;
Member/Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response
Team; Member/First United Methodist Church in Omaha, Neb. plus
2 others

**Comprehensive Immigration, Refugee, Migrant
and Asylum Reform-APPROVED**

RATIONALE: The decision to not consider domestic abuse and gang violence as grounds for asylum, will affect large numbers of Central Americans who have increasingly turned to the United States for protection. With the already more than 700 children being separated along the southwest border from adults claiming to be their parents, including the 100 children under the age of four, this anti-family and family policy will put tens of thousands of domestic violence cases in the current immigration court backlog.

WHEREAS, it will also undermine claims of women suffering violence throughout the world, including sex trafficking. It is needlessly ripping kids, toddlers, and babies away from their parents in a very inhumane way.

WHEREAS, likewise, the policies that have slashed the number of refugees entering to our country has put millions of families lives in jeopardy. Refugees do not choose to leave their homes but who are forced to flee.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church, partnering with the Church World Service through UMCOR and the faith community with our proud history of standing with the vulnerable and protecting the persecuted, we believe that we should care to live out our nation's values for compassion, hospitality, and solidarity with our fellow human beings and see and call for the end to these inhumane and vicious acts upon humanity.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church call on our fellow citizens to rescind the unchristian and inhuman death sentence for many asylum seekers trying to enter this country to escape the dangerously unstable situations in the homes they are fleeing.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that churches study the issues and

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respond in these or other ways:

- Join the National Call-In Day Actions
- Host an interfaith #WhereRtheRefugees event
- Plan a visit with your member of Congress
- Write op-eds and letters to the editor
- Share on social media
- Celebrate World Refugee Day June 20th every year

Implemented by: UMCOR, Church World Service, Great Plains Conference, and Dellrose United Methodist Church

Signatures: Rev. Dr. Kevass J Harding plus 5 others.

Submitted by: LRev. Dr. Kevass J Harding, Dellrose United Methodist Church, Great Plains Conference